

Continued Development of Screening Criteria to Develop Range of Alternatives



Advisory Committee
November 1, 2005
Sacramento, California

Overview of Discussion

- ◆ **Legislative/Statutory Mandates used to develop Alternatives**
- ◆ **Development of screening criteria**

Overview of Approach to Developing Alternatives

- ◆ **Consider the Legal/Statutory Mandates to guide the objectives**
- ◆ **Identify goals and objectives for Air Quality, Water Quality, and Habitat components**
- ◆ **Develop screening criteria to focus development of alternatives**

QSA Legislation Identified Goals for Several Components



Legislative/Statutory Mandates Considered in this Study

- ◆ **QSA Legislation**
- ◆ **Clean Air and Clean Water Acts**
- ◆ **Endangered Species Acts**
- ◆ **1924 Executive Order for the Salton Sea**
- ◆ **Legislation that established Torres
Martinez Tribal Land**
- ◆ **Legislation that established the refuges**
- ◆ **Others**

Goals from Legal/Statutory Mandates

- ◆ **Air Quality**
 - State Implementation Plans and other regulatory requirements for Air Quality Management Districts
 - Air quality mitigation in the No Action Alternative
 - Eliminate air quality impacts due to the restoration
- ◆ **Water Quality**
 - Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan defines beneficial uses
 - Protect water quality to support beneficial uses

Goals from Legal/Statutory Mandates - continued

◆ **Adjacent Land Uses**

- Continued use of the Salton Sea as a permanent drainage reservoir for irrigation drainage, stormwater drainage, and treated wastewater effluent
- Protection of current land ownership
 - ◆ Refuges and Parks
 - ◆ Tribal lands
 - ◆ Other Federal lands

◆ **Recreation and Local Economics**

- Assess the protection of recreational opportunities and creation of opportunities for improved local economic conditions

Goals from Legal/Statutory Mandates - continued

◆ **Habitat**

- Protect federal and state listed species
- Restore long-term stable aquatic and shoreline habitat for the historic levels and diversity of fish and wildlife that depend upon the Salton Sea
- Restoration of the Salton Sea ecosystem and the permanent protection of the wildlife dependent on that ecosystem

Concepts Initially Developed for Screening Criteria

◆ **Range of Fish and Wildlife Habitats**

- Deep, open water (marine lake: 30,000-40,000 mg/L)
- Shoreline/shallow water (Salton Sea margin)
- Freshwater marsh (refuges, duck clubs)
- Saline habitat complex (as presented to the Habitat Working Group)
- Upland

◆ **Range of Water Quality Management**

- Developed specifically to prevent eco-risk and human health risk within habitat and other areas

Concepts Initially Developed for Screening Criteria - cont.

◆ **Range of Air Quality Management**

- Vegetation
- Flooding
- Salt Crust
- Covering with dry material

◆ **Range of Inflows**

- Accommodate known and estimated factors over next 75 years

Habitat Working Group Considered Draft Habitat Goals and Objectives

◆ **Restoration of the Salton Sea ecosystem and permanent protection of the wildlife dependent on that ecosystem**

- Restore long-term stable aquatic and shoreline habitat for the historic levels and diversity of fish and wildlife that depend upon the Salton Sea
- Promote habitat diversity by maintaining a mosaic of habitat types within and adjacent to the Salton Sea
- Enhance quality of existing habitats through improvement in water quality and management

Draft Habitat Goals and Objectives - continued

- Promote effective use of available water resources to create habitats that provide for species diversity and abundance
- Incorporate flexibility in the facility and habitat designs to address current uncertainties through adaptive management and ability to respond to future changes in conditions and status of individual species
- Develop a monitoring and adaptive management plan to generate data that will reduce uncertainty and build scientific basis for future management

Draft Screening Criteria were Developed based on Goals

- ◆ **Initial discussions with Habitat Working Group - will continue to be discussed on November 30, 2005**
- ◆ **Provided today for discussion purposes only by the Advisory Committee**
- ◆ **Screening Criteria defined as a requirement for all alternatives considered in the PEIR and Ecosystem Restoration Study**

Draft Habitat Screening Criteria

Proposed Criterion:

- ◆ *Alternative must support a self-sustaining fish population that will provide an adequate forage base for fish-eating birds and a recreational fishery*

Unresolved Issues:

- ◆ Should a recreational fishery be included as a screening criterion?
- ◆ Are marine fish required components of “historic diversity” as defined in the legislation?

Draft Habitat Screening Criteria

Proposed Criterion:

- ◆ *Alternative must provide habitat that is sustainable and permanently protected*

Unresolved Issues:

- ◆ None

Draft Habitat Screening Criteria

Proposed Criterion:

- ◆ *Alternative must use water to create or enhance shallow water habitats that would not increase ecological risk to unacceptable levels*

Unresolved Issues:

- ◆ None

Draft Habitat Screening Criteria

Proposed Criterion:

- ◆ *Alternative must achieve habitat goals of the project without creating significant habitat effects (such as a loss of habitat) within or outside the Salton Sea Basin that cannot be adequately or feasibly mitigated*

Unresolved Issues:

- ◆ None

Draft Habitat Screening Criteria

Proposed Criterion:

- ◆ *Alternative must provide connectivity for desert pupfish that use the agricultural drains on both the south side of the Salton Sea and on the north side of the Salton Sea while not precluding pupfish movement to and from San Felipe and/or Salt Creek during flood flows. (Includes development of a genetic exchange plan.)*

Unresolved Issues:

- ◆ None

Draft Habitat Screening Criteria

Proposed Criterion:

- ◆ *Alternative must retain the function and value of habitats historically available at the Salton Sea*

Unresolved Issues:

- ◆ Is criterion too broad to be effective screening tool?
- ◆ Clarification of “habitats historically available”
- ◆ Should criterion also include retention of the current amounts of all but deep, open water habitat?

Draft Habitat Screening Criteria

Proposed Criterion:

- ◆ *Alternative must replace the function and values of the river delta habitat and retain the characteristics of at least some of the existing delta habitats*

Unresolved Issues:

- ◆ Is it necessary to retain at least one of the existing deltas, or is it sufficient to replace the functions, values, and characteristics of the delta habitats?

Draft Habitat Screening Criteria

Proposed Criterion:

- ◆ *Alternative must not result in any irreversible fish and wildlife population impacts during construction and project implementation*

Unresolved Issues:

- ◆ Is this feasible to not have irreversible impacts?

Other Considerations for Screening Criteria

- ◆ **Support of Salton Sea Communities**
 - Maximize water along existing shoreline
- ◆ **Acceptable Commitment of Non-renewable Resources (such as Energy)**
- ◆ **Institutional Feasibility**
 - Approvals by multiple agencies within reasonable time period = 5 years??
- ◆ **Flexibility over and beyond 75 years**
 - Changes in flows and other conditions
 - Changes in species needs
- ◆ **Constructability and length of construction**
- ◆ **Life cycle costs**